

Two weeks ago, Taliban terrorists detonated an Improvised Explosive Device that killed a U.S. soldier here in Afghanistan. That fellow American was Sgt. First Class James Ochsner, son of Beach Park's Robert and Sandra Ochsner. James was 36 years old, serving with the Army's Second Battalion of the 3rd Special Forces Group in Orgun. The Ochsner family buried James at Arlington cemetery yesterday with full military honors. Tonight, I presented the commander of all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, with a picture of the Ochsners and a letter from his father to "his military family" - the men of James' unit. Keep reading for photos...



General Eikenberry was as sad as I was about the loss of James and will make a special note of his service. The Ochsners are a military family and they told me they knew of the risks Americans in uniform take. We should all think about this young man from Waukegan and the commitment he made to his country, ten time zones from home.



I also had a chance to meet with a number of soldiers and sailors from Illinois serving with Combined Forces Command Afghanistan here in the capital city of Kabul. They know their work is dangerous but vital to the safety of Americans. I asked about the chow, bunk arrangements and chances for R&R. To a man and woman they said they were all going to continue their reenlistments or service as officers in the U.S. military.